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all with the elk, in spite of that misguided beast's extremely inconvenient hostility.

"Instead of stretchin' yer fool neck that way, tryin' to git at me," he expostulated, leaning from his branch. "ye'd a sight better be keepin' yer eyes peeled for yer own hide. There's a darn big painter hidin' somewheres in them bushes yander, an' while ye're a-clawin' after me—which ain't no use at all—he'll be gettin' his claws inter you, first thing ye know!"

But it was plain that the bull did not understand English, or at least McLaggan's primitive variation on English. He seemed to grow more pugnacious than ever at the sound of these mild exhortations. He made the most extravagant efforts to reach McLaggan's refuge with horn or hoof. Convinced himself at last that this was impossible, he glared about him wrathfully till his eyes fell on McLaggan's pack lying near by.

Appearing to regard it as part of McLaggan, he fell upon it triumphantly. His edged hoofs slashed it and smashed it, his pronged antlers ripped it wide open; and in a dozen seconds he had sent the contents flying in every direction. The contents were miscellaneous, as McLaggan had been in to the settlement for the purpose of replenishing his stores. They included, among other items, a two-gallon tin of molasses, a little tin of pepper enveloped in a flaring scarlet label, a white cotton bag of flour, a paper bag of beans, and another of sugar. The beans and the sugar went all abroad at the first attack, the big and the little tin rolled away, and the bull devoted his attention for a moment to the bag of flour. He ripped it wide open with his antlers, then blew into it scornfully so that the flour puffed up into his face. Having accomplished all this with such surprising ease, he seemed to think he might now succeed in getting at McLaggan himself. He came under the branch once more, and glared upward through what looked like a pair of white goggles, so thickly were his eye-sockets rimmed with flour. He snorted fresh defiance through wide red nostrils nicely clogged with white.

McLaggan was now too angry to appreciate the extraordinary appearance of his foe. At the scattering of his precious supplies his sympathies had gone over completely to the panther. He spat down upon his adversary in impotent indignation.

"I hope the painter'll git ye after all," he cried, with a bunch of expletives too virile for the cold exposure of the printed page.

In reply the bull made another earnest effort to reach him. Then, once more disappointed, he returned to the pack to see what further satisfaction he could get out of it.

Finding that there was no resistance left in the beans, the sugar, or the bag of flour, he went after the little scarlet tin of pepper, which had been thrown some distance and lay under a neighboring tree. He slashed it open with a stroke of the hoof, then jabbed it with a prong of his antlers and flung it into the air. It fell on his shoulders, emptying most of its contents into the long hair on the ridge of his neck. Startled at this attack he jumped around sharply, and was just in the middle of pounding the impertinent thing viciously under foot, when, to his annoyance, he began to sneeze. It was such sneezing as he had never experienced before. He spread his legs wide, and devoted himself to it with all his energies.

This was too much for McLaggan's wrath. He forgot it in an ecstasy of delight. He was just on the point of explosion, when he saw something which made him check himself with a choked expletive.

The panther was creeping out upon a great branch almost over the sneezing bull's head.

The next moment it dropped from

the branch, and fastened teeth and claws in the elk's neck.

The bull was just in the middle of a terrific paroxysm, but the cruel shock of this assault brought him to. With a grunt he bounded into the air, coming down upon all four feet again, stiff-legged, like a bucking horse, as if thinking the jar might shake his assailant off. Failing in this he sprang violently sideways; and at the same time, being a beast of resource, he struck back with the prongs of his antlers by jerking his muzzle sharply upward.

In the meantime the panther was clawing and biting savagely, and seemed likely to maintain his hold in spite of the clever tactics of his adversary. But just at this point the pepper in the bull's mane began to take irresistible effect, both in eyes and nostrils. The amazed panther let out a screech of protest, which ended in a convulsive sneeze. In the midst of this convulsion the bull side-stepped again with distressing energy; and the panther, half-blinded and wholly bewildered, was thrown to the ground. The manoeuvre was almost equally disastrous to McLaggan, who, rocking with laughter, all but fell out of his tree.

The moment he had shaken himself clear the bull, undaunted, whirled and struck like lightning with his formidable forehooves. With equal alertness the panther succeeded in eluding the stroke. He doubled lithely aside, and sprang again, seeking to recover his former advantage. But being half-blinded he fell short and only got a grip with his front claws. As he struggled savagely to make good his hold against the plunging and the thrashing antlers of his antagonist, once more the pepper in his nostrils began to work with power. In spite of his passionate refusal of the gigantic titillation, his head went up in the air, his spine straightened itself out, his jaws and his claws opened—and the huge sneeze ripped stridently from his lungs. It ended in a screech of rage and disappointment as he found himself once more rolling on the ground, striking out blindly with futile claws.

As he recovered himself he warily bounced aside, lightly as a loosed spring. But he was not quite quick enough. One of those battering hooves that were playing for him so nimbly caught him on the haunch. It caught him aslant, or it would have shattered the great joint beyond hope of recovery. But it was enough for his catchship. With a scream he darted off beneath a low-branched thickset, ran lamely up another tree, and crept away from the place of his discomfiture by the path of the interlacing branches. He wanted no elk-meat which tasted like that.

The victor stood glaring after him for half a minute, snorting, and shaking his triumphant antlers. Then he came and glared up at McLaggan, as much as to say:

"Did you see that? That's the way I'd fix you, too, if only you'd come down here and stand up to me!"

As for his cruel wounds on flank and neck, he seemed quite unaware of them. But he was evidently a little tired, for he made no further attempts to reach McLaggan's refuge.

"You're sure some punkins!" declared McLaggan admiringly, wiping his eyes on his sleeve. "Who'd ever 'a' thought any bull elk could lick a painter that quick?"

Scorning that he be conciliated by compliment, the bull turned away to see if there was any further damage he could inflict on McLaggan's belongings.

Ah, yes, to be sure, there was the bright, unsullied tin of molasses, just where he had hurled it. He pranced over and slashed at it, in spite of McLaggan's appeals, and opened a generous gash through which the amber-brown stickiness came bulging forth phlegmatically. The bull eyed this phenomenon, and then, scornful of

(Continued on Page 15)

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